

Highlights

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change

M *Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change*: a status report on initiatives in Ontario to reduce greenhouse gas emissions was prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy for the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and the Council of Energy Ministers.

The following are highlights of the report:

- Many of the strategic directions recommended in the National Action Program have been pursued in Ontario. The province has traditionally shown leadership in energy efficiency — an area key to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Ontario will build on the province's past leadership in energy efficiency and pollution prevention to support climate change objectives. For example, energy efficiency will be enhanced through broadened coverage of products under the *Energy Efficiency Act* and through activities in the Green Communities program. Emissions in the transportation sector will be reduced by investments in public transit, vehicle inspection and maintenance, and through government/industry partnerships on cleaner vehicles and fuels. Environmental guidelines are being considered for the management of landfill gas.
- The Ontario government continues to be a strong supporter of the Voluntary Challenge and Registry Program — an important component of the National Action Program. The government believes that Ontario industries will respond to the Voluntary Challenge with innovative action plans, tailored to their specific operations that will enable emission reductions in cost-effective ways. Many Ontario-based companies, and municipal and regional governments, already have developed action plans or have registered commitments with the Voluntary Challenge.
- The Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy intends to register an Action Plan under the Voluntary Challenge for improved energy management in government operations.

- Clearly, more work is needed as the province seeks to meet its responsibilities by adopting a precautionary approach to climate change. In assessing further options, the province will look for cross-cutting solutions that help address multiple objectives beyond reduced greenhouse gas emissions, such as reduced ground level ozone, improved energy savings, or sustainable development.
- The province is continuing to study the options to identify further cost-effective opportunities for building upon current initiatives. Studies have been commissioned to provide guidance on future actions, as the province looks for opportunities to achieve sustainable, long-term reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Long-term solutions are required to address this long-term problem. The province is looking for cost-effective actions that will result in sustainable improvements in emission levels for many years to come, avoiding costly "quick fixes". Some actions will be possible over the short-term. Others will require a gradual modification of behaviour and consumption patterns over time.
- The government is seeking cost-effective measures that achieve environmental benefits without impacting adversely on the industrial base or economic growth. The emphasis will be on solutions that are consistent with the fiscal and economic realities of the province, and the need to maintain the international competitiveness of Ontario's industries. Opportunities for positive economic spinoffs to industry and job creation will be sought.
- Climate change is a shared responsibility. There are roles for both public and private sector actions to reduce emissions. Ontario looks forward to working in partnership with other federal, provincial and territorial governments. The province supports federal leadership toward this national goal, and encourages the federal government to actively pursue opportunities for harmonizing policies and measures with the United States and other developed countries that will facilitate greater global emission reductions, without impacting adversely on Canada's industrial competitiveness.
- Managing climate change will involve an evolutionary process, reassessing progress and introducing new approaches as required. Existing initiatives provide a solid basis upon which further actions may be expanded or developed.
- The policies and programs in place today, the actions planned and the studies in progress together will provide a framework upon which further actions may be introduced as all sectors in the provincial economy work toward the national climate change objectives.

To obtain a copy of the "*Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change*", A status report on initiatives in Ontario to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - (PIBS No. 3387E in English only) contact: Ministry of Environment and Energy, Public Information Centre, 135 St. Clair Ave. W. Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5
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